Thomas Alva Edison's Last Words

"It is very beautiful over there."

Barely possible he had already
seen the other side, using one
of his inventions to allow him
to move through states of being
like an amphibious plane
through air and on water;
a machine he never patented,
but kept in a secret room,
fearing an epidemic of suicides,
an erosion in faith—if Paradise
were merely no more
than a chemical reaction.

Much more likely, hallucinations;
wishing, as he descended,
for a place forever Spring,
cool breezes lifting branches,
and the skirts of women
a teasing inch above ankles;
all the usual fantasies of heaven
dancing in his brain severing
the connections with the only life
he could ever be sure of.

Still, a pretty dream, something
to hope for at the last moment,
facing what a lifetime
would never prepare him for—
that darkness a million times deeper
than a child's fear of the night,
heavier than all the mountains
in the universe, piled one
upon the other forever.

Robert Cooperman